

Parton cuts STI testing for students without symptoms, exposure

By **TONY SJODIN**
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News Editor & Contributing Writer

Parton Center for Health and Wellness has temporarily cut its “Peace of Mind” sexually transmitted infections (STI) screening program, which previously allowed students to be screened for STIs without exhibiting symptoms. On-campus testing is now limited to students who have had a recent exposure or are exhibiting symptoms of an STI. Some students who have called to ask for Peace of Mind screenings have been unable to get tested and have felt shamed by Parton’s response to their request.

The Vermont Department of Health labs that typically process most of Middlebury’s tests have converted their capacity to Covid-19 testing and are not running STI testing, according to Director of Health Services Sandy Robinson. Parton can send tests to Porter Medical Center, but a shortage of testing supplies and high costs have led Parton to prioritize symptomatic testing over regular screenings.

Screening costs vary depending on a student’s health insurance. Common tests like gonorrhea and chlamydia cost \$25 out-of-pocket if run through the VT Department of Health labs, but \$222 if run through the Porter Hospital labs. The Gallagher Student Health Insurance provided through the college covers 90% of testing costs, but students on separate insurance or who do not want to use their parents’ insurance may see much higher costs. Parton’s website recom-

Students quarantined for Covid-19 violations regardless of evidence of exposure



COURTESY PHOTO

Several on-campus buildings have been repurposed as quarantine and isolation housing this year including Adirondack House (above), which usually functions as the Center for Careers and Internships. Under a policy that was never officially announced, students can be placed in quarantine for breaking certain Covid-19 health guidelines — even if they have had no known exposure to the virus.

By **SOPHIA McDERMOTT-HUGHES**
News Editor

Middlebury students have become accustomed to quarantining when they have been exposed to Covid-19 or as a preemptive move-in measure, but a new and unannounced policy temporarily places students into quarantine housing after they’ve committed Covid-19 policy violations if those violations included high-risk behavior.

This new measure, which Dean of Students Derek Doucet said has impacted around a dozen individuals, puts students in quarantine for Covid-19 protocol violations that the Office of Community Standards deems “a credible allegation of behavior that might lead to transmission.” Doucet said that the policy is designed to combat potential public health risks.

The Policy

The college enacted the policy of quarantining students who violated Covid-19 guidelines at the be-

ginning of this semester, according to Doucet. Administrators realized that existing disciplinary procedures did not take into account the immediate public health risk posed by certain types of Covid-19 protocol violations like large gatherings in small spaces without masks.

“When we have those incidents, we’re really worried about the possibility of exposure and transmission, and so we ask those students to go into quarantine as a public health measure,” Doucet said. “It’s not intended as a punitive measure.”

Though this policy has reportedly been in place for months, the college never informed the student body of its implementation.

While the Spring Campus Guide Conduct Expectations section does inform students that they must “participate in isolation and quarantine when directed,” it does not mention the possibility of being placed in quarantine for a Covid-19 rule violation.

Instead, the Contact Tracing, Isolation, and Quarantine section describes quarantine as “a way for individuals who may have been exposed to Covid-19 through

close contact with an infected individual to limit their contact with others while it is determined whether they have Covid-19.”

Students were not placed in quarantine until up to two days following their violation. Doucet says administrators try to process Covid-19 conduct incident reports and meet with students within the first two days of the incident because “the science suggests that the chance of passing on the virus remains low in that time period.” Students may then be instructed to complete a quarantine if it is found that there is a credible allegation that the student engaged in unsafe behavior.

Unlike students under quarantine as close contacts, who are tested separately at Parton to avoid exposure to other students and in accordance with the exact timing of their day-seven tests, students quarantined for violations are tested at the Virtue Field House during the normal testing times with the rest of the student body, according to Environmental Health and Safety

*Continued online at
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Students struggle to keep afloat as isolation, workload and grief compound

One in every six Vermont-based Middlebury students sought counseling appointments last semester, and intake forms have displayed a marked increase in signs of anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts, according to Counseling Services

By **SOPHIA McDERMOTT-HUGHES**
News Editor

Students have struggled to stay afloat during a year rife with uncertainty, grief and isolation. Counseling Services has seen a marked increase in students showing signs of anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts on intake forms this year, according to Associate Director of Clinical Operations Ben Gooch. And for many students, the pandemic’s toll on mental health is only increasing, with stressors emerging from every corner of student life.

Living in a pandemic

Many students are grappling with existential questions about what it means to live through a global tragedy of this scale, according to Gooch.

Over the last year, students, along with the rest of the world, have watched Covid-19 deaths rise na-

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Vergennes Laundry, a gourmet bakery, coffee shop and restaurant in Vergennes, reopened its doors in January,

LOCAL

LOCAL

Woodchuck Cider brand returns to local ownership

By **IDEAL DOWLING**
& **MANYA KULA**

Local Editor & Contributing Writer

At less than 7% of its acquisition price, The Middlebury-based Vermont Cider Company (VCC) — best known by Middlebury students and residents for its popular product Woodchuck Hard Cider — has been sold to Northeast Drinks Group in a recent deal completed on April 9. Northeast Drinks Group was created solely to purchase VCC and reestablish local ownership, according to firm partner David Mander.

Before the \$20 million purchase, the company was owned by C&C Group, an internationally-based Irish drinks conglomerate. When C&C bought VCC in 2012, the sale price was \$305 million — three times the valuation of VCC at the time.

Part of that 2012 purchase hinged on the popularity of Woodchuck Cider, which was the largest cider brand in the country at the time. At \$20 million, Northeast Drinks Group LLC is doling out 93% less than what C&C paid for VCC.

The deal marks the first acquisition for Northeast Drinks Group, a private holding company run by executives in the beverage industry in New England that includes some current employees from VCC. The group plans to keep all contracts

and current employees during the transition without any immediate changes to the cider brand.

“We plan to support the VCC portfolio with a robust marketing spend and innovative programming. We’ll also leverage the ultra-modern facility to incubate and bring new brands to market over the coming years,” Mander said in an email to The Campus.

Through the deal, Northeast Drinks Company will also gain control over Green Mountain Beverage, a division of VCC that specializes in the manufacturing and packaging of beverage products.

“All of us at Vermont Cider Company couldn’t be happier with Northeast Drinks Group coming on board,” VCC General Manager Ben Calvi said in a press release. “I’ve enjoyed working alongside their team through the acquisition process and am excited to be joining them as we execute their vision for the future.”

In addition to Woodchuck Hard Cider, VCC’s collection of brands include Wyder’s, Gumption, Magner, Blackthorn and Viva Spritz ciders. Launched in 1991, Woodchuck was VCC’s first product and will celebrate its 13th anniversary this year.

Bridget Blacklock, vice president

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By **RACHEL LU**

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By **SOPHIA McDERMOTT-HUGHES**

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